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Edgar Allan Poe

 Edgar Allan Poe was born on January 19, 1809 in Boston, Massachusetts. Both of Poe’s parents were actors. He had an elderly brother and a younger sister. In 1810 his father abandoned the family and within a year his mother day of consumption. Poe went to live with John Allan and his family. As a sign of respect for his new family Poe took the middle name Allan and this s why we know him as Edgar Allan Poe. In 1815 The Allan family and Poe traveled to England. In England Poe started to attend school. He went to a school called Grammar School in Irvine, Scotland and in 1817 he went to a boarding school in Chelsea. In 1826 he attended the University of Virginia, but he left within a year.

In 1827 he traveled to Boston under the assumed name of Henri Le Rennet. While being in Boston he published Tamerlane and Other Poems under that assumed name. Poe needed money so he joined the United States Army under the assume name of Edgar A. Perry. He served for two years as a Sergeant Major. He then moved to Baltimore, Maryland to live with his aunt. In August 1931 his brother died of tuberculosis. Poe began to publish short stories where he won a prize for the short story The Manuscript found in a Bottle.

He secretly married his thirteen year old cousin on September 22, 1835. His promise of good behavior gave him the opportunity to start a job again as the assistant editor on the Southern Literary Messenger in Richmond. On May 16, 1836 he publicly married his cousin an in 1837 he quit working in the Southern Literary Messenger.

On October 3, 1849 Poe was found on the streets of Baltimore in a very bad condition. He was taken to the Washington College Hospital, but his condition worsened even more. On October 7, 1849 Edgar Allan Poe passed away.

The Black Cat

By Edgar Allan Poe

The Black Cat starts with a man narrating how his life was when he was a child and how his love for animals grew. He then informs us (readers) that he got married at an early age. His wife also had love for animals. They had all sorts of animals in their home, but the one he focuses the most is a black cat by the name of Pluto. Pluto was his favorite animal and the one he enjoyed playing the most. Years pass by and the man’s attitude started to change. His temper is so bad that he started to offend his wife by using bad language and he also started using violence. One night as he came home drunk Pluto tried to avoid him but the man was determined to seize him. The cat’s natural instinct was to run away but as he did this he wounded the man’s hand. Furiously he gets a pen- knife cuts the cat’s throat and plucks an eye out. In the morning the cat is terrified still so the man feels sorry for the crime he had committed. Time goes by and the cat slowly recovered. One morning the man can’t take anymore how the cat runs away every time he approaches him. The man in a cruel deed takes a noose and hangs the cat on a tree. That same night the man’s house is caught on fire. The man, his wife, and a servant had the time to run away from the house without being hurt. The next day he goes to the ruins and sees that everything was destroyed except for a wall with the figure of a cat.  He thought about this for months until one night he finds another black cat. This cat looks very much like Pluto, except that this one had a white spot. The man caresses the cat for a while but then plans to go back home. The cat follows him to the house so the man takes it home. The wife immediately falls in love, but the man started to hate the animal as the time goes by. One day the wife accompanied him to do some household errands as they walk down the stairs the cat gets in front of the man. The man furiously takes an axe to kill the cat as he did this his wife grabs him by the hand. When she did this the man grabs the axe and buries it in his wife’s brain. He thought of many ways where he could hide the body, but the best place he thought of putting it was in a wall. The hides the body there and the cat disappears after this incident. Days go by and the man is still waiting for the cat to return so he could kill it. The fourth day policemen unexpectedly arrive into the house to keep investigating about the first incident. The man very smartly started talking about how well his house was built. As he talked he hit the very same spot with a cane where he had buried his wife. A sudden cry is heard from the wall. Everybody became motionless, but after a while the policemen started to bring down the wall. As they did this the body came into sight and on top of it stood the black cat.

Analysis of Short Story

   The short story *The Black Cat* written by Edgar Allan Poe has an autobiographical literary theory. I say this because even though Poe is not the one narrating his life he has a character that does in the story. As a reader we never get to know the narrator’s name. We just know about his life because he is telling us everything that happened in his life. As a reader we can immediately realize that the story is told in first person. As I did Poe’s biography I read that he has a lot of problems due to alcoholism and in this the story the narrator begins to exhibit these strange habits of drinking also. My opinion is that maybe Poe didn’t used himself as the main character but that he did use the problems that he was facing to introduce us to his personal problem through the character. We can also conclude that the events that occur in the story are told by something that already took place.

   To prove my second point I believe that another major literary theory in the short story is the one of the travel theory discuss also in class. “For the most wild, yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. Mad indeed would I be to expect it, in a case where my very senses reject their own evidence. Yet, mad am I not --and very surely do I not dream. But to-morrow I die and to-day I would unburden my soul.” By this quote from the story we can clearly see that the story is being told after everything happen. The narrator is going back to the event and remembering everything that happen, as he does this we are the ones getting to know the situation. As we discussed in class the travel theory explains that an individual can use his imagination or an object to remember better everything that happened in the past. In the Black Cat the narrator uses his mind to go back to the past and explain us the circumstances he went through.

     The last literary theory that I would like to point out is the part where the black cat that he found after Pluto can be a symbol of Dadaism.” The reader will remember that this mark, although large, had been originally very indefinite; but, by slow degrees -- degrees nearly imperceptible, and which for a long time my Reason struggled to reject as fanciful -- it had, at length, assumed a rigorous distinctness of outline. It was now the representation of an object that I shudder to name -- and for this, above all, I loathed, and dreaded, and would have rid myself of the monster had I dared -- it was now, I say, the image of a hideous -- of a ghastly thing -- of the GALLOWS ! -- oh, mournful and terrible engine of Horror and of Crime -- of Agony and of Death!” I say that it can be a symbol of Dadaism because as to what I understood in class Dadaism is something that can be view as an art. You take a look at a picture but underneath that picture you can see another image that is presented, but you have to look carefully at it in order to see it.  The white spot that the second cat had was something normal, but as time passed by the spot started to resemble the gallows. This exactly what Dadaism is about you take a look at something but then this image resembles something else.

References

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